

Creating a Positive Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Experience: An Institutional Journey

AZTransfer Summit 2019

Presentation by

Rose Rojas
Director for Curriculum and
Transfer Articulation
Maricopa Community Colleges

Dr. Kerrie Specker
Faculty Chair, Computer
Technology
Rio Salado College

In This Session...



Building the case for PLA – Why pursue an institutional PLA strategy



Statewide efforts and legislation shaping PLA policy in Arizona



Progress, plans, and challenges of our district's work on PLA



How you can advance PLA efforts at your institution

What is PLA?

PLA is the evaluation of **verifiable** learning gained through:

- Standardized exams
- Work experiences
- Licenses, certifications and other credentials
- Military training
- Online and Open Educational Resources (OER)
- Seminars, workshops, in-service training
- Continuing professional education
- Non-credit courses
- Study at other academic environments
- Volunteer work



Why PLA?

Arizona as a Case Study

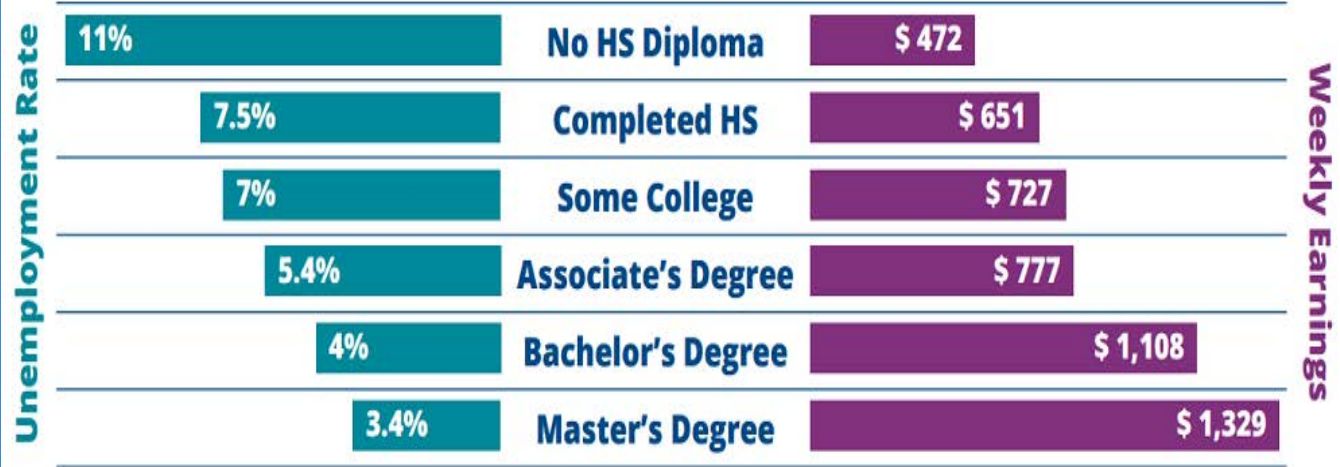


- By 2020, over 68% of AZ jobs will require some postsecondary education, 3% higher than the national average of 65% (Carnevale, A., Smith, N. & Strohl, J., 2013).
- Arizonans with a college degree will earn over \$830,000 more during their lifetimes than those with only a high school diploma (Daly, M. & Bengali, L., 2014).
- Among AZ residents of working age (ages 25-64), 64% have no college degree, 14% have less than a HS diploma, 24.4% have a high school diploma or equivalent, 25.6% have some college but no degree, 8.5% have an associate's degree, 17.3% have a bachelor degree, and 10.2% have a graduate or professional degree (American Community Survey, 2015).

Why PLA? Arizona as a Case Study



National Unemployment Rate and Weekly Earnings by Educational Attainment Status



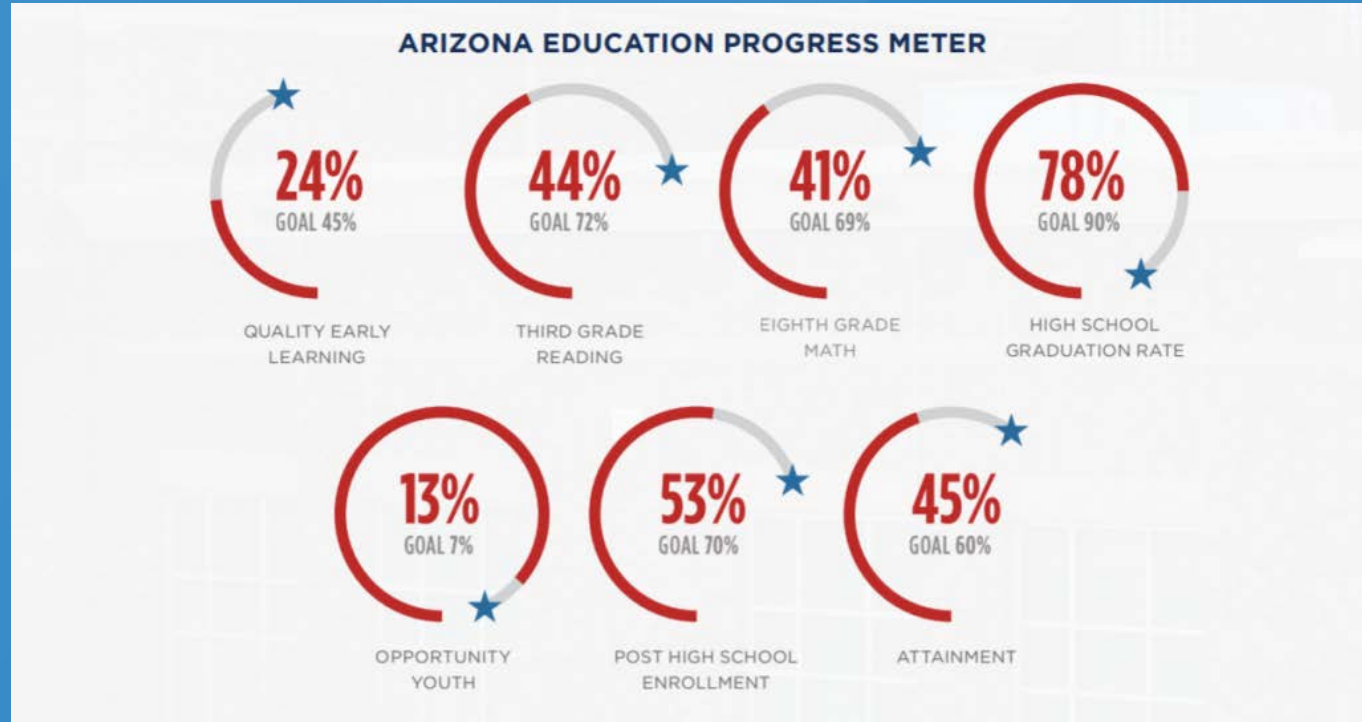
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

\$3.5 Billion

The amount of personal income and tax revenue that would be pumped into our state annually— if AZ reached the goal of 60% of adults ages 25-64 with a professional certificate or degree

Why PLA?

Arizona as a Case Study



Many students at top high schools go to college, but few do from AZ rural, tribal & urban communities.

Why PLA?

It Serves Today's Student

- Traditional student paradigm is shifting
- Postsecondary education experience is more diverse; average student age is increasing
- Traditional approaches (2+2 models, dual enrollment programs, & direct instruction) don't solve a nontraditional problem
- Both students and employers disillusioned with traditional higher education
- Dwindling number of traditional students; new market comprised of adult learners and employers, market driving needs, career preparation, and flexible formats
- Higher education needs to be more responsive and agile to support the needs of changing learner demographics

Why PLA?

It's the Ethical Thing to do

- As higher education institutions, we have a unique mission to provide open access and affordable, quality education to all who desire to learn
- Institutional recognition of PLA is critical to the development of an equitable higher education system
- As student advocates and colleagues, we should openly discuss matters affecting PLA with an emphasis on collaboration for facilitating academic, credit, and learner mobility
- It's a shared responsibility between and among all postsecondary institution.
- It is important to remember who public community colleges and universities serve – the public! Access to higher education and degrees, for everyone, matters



PLA Challenges and Concerns

- A college classroom is the only place to learn
- PLA is a way to “sell credit” to students
- PLA will negatively impact enrollment in certain classes (competition)
- PLA students have low success rates
- Skeptical of the quality of learning
- Need to focus on learning method, not outcomes (WHO and WHERE instead of WHAT)
- Often unfamiliar with what PLA is

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES

- **Build trust through transparency**
- **Ensure that prior learning assessment really fits the mission and organizational culture of an institution**
- **Revise policies that may hinder acceptance and application of PLA**
- **Emphasize assessment and verifiable college level learning**
- **Transform thinking - PLA evaluates WHAT the student has learned, not WHERE the student has learned it or from WHOM**

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES

- **Understand what type of PLA options are at your college**
- **Learn where these options housed and administered**
- **Improve the promotion and presentation of these options for students**
- **Maintain regular information-sharing and training sessions across campus constituencies, including staff, faculty, and administrators.**
- **Keep the momentum as transfer advocates**
- **Implement a Faculty Driven Decision and Engagement Model to gain faculty buy-in for PLA projects**

FACULTY
DRIVEN
MODEL:

RIO SALADO
COLLEGE

Testing Center and Appropriate Chair work
together:

1. [Application Process](#)
2. Approval Process
3. Student Notification

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COLLEGE

Computer Technology Department Options:

- Current, Valid Industry Certifications:
 - CompTia
 - Adobe Certified Associate (ACA)
 - Microsoft Office (MOS)
 - Certified Internet Web (CIW)

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Certification Exam Format:

- Project-based & use simulations
- [MOS](#)
- [ACA](#)
- [CompTia](#)

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CompTia Certifications:

- A+
 - BPC170; BPC270 = 6 credits
- Network+
 - CIS190 = 3 credits
- Security+
 - CIS270 = 3 credits



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Adobe Certifications (ACA):

- Illustrator
 - CIS120DB = 3 credits
- Animate
 - CIS120DC = 3 credits
- Photoshop
 - CIS120DF = 3 credits
- InDesign
 - CIS138DA = 3 credits
- Dreamweaver
 - CIS233DC - 3 credits



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Microsoft Office Specialist / Expert:

- Word Specialist
 - CIS113DE = 3 credits
- Word Expert
 - CIS213DE = 3 credits
- PowerPoint Specialist
 - CIS118AB & CIS118BB = 2 credits
- Excel Specialist & Expert
 - CIS114DE & CIS214DE = 6 credits
- Access Specialist
 - CIS117DM = 3 credits



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Certified Internet Web Professional (CIW):

- Web Foundations Associate
 - CIS133DA = 3 credits
- Web Foundations Assoc & Adv HTML5/CSS
 - CIS233DA = 3 credits
- E-Commerce Specialist
 - CIS235 = 3 credits



Certified Internet
Web Professional

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Certification Requirements:

- Certs no more than 3 yrs old at time of eval
 - Exam # / Software Version control
- Certificate / Transcript must be submitted by student
- Must be validated by Chair

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Certification Validation:

- CompTia
 - <https://www.certmetrics.com/comptia/public/verification.aspx>
- Adobe & Microsoft
 - <https://certiport.com/Portal/Pages/CredentialVerification.aspx>
- CIW
 - <https://i7lp.integral7.com/durango/do/login?ownername=certpart&channel=CIW>

Conclusion and Questions

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION



Rose Rojas

rose.rojas@domail.maricopa.edu

Kerrie Specker

kerrie.specker@riosalado.edu